

Interview with Elizabeth Gips and Patty

Interviewer: Tim Miller

March 21, 1996

**Q:** Alright. I'd like, first of all, just basic dimensions. You went on the Caravan, lived at the Farm for awhile. Is that your main –

**EG:** --No.

**Q:** Could you just outline where you were and what you did?

**EG:** To begin with, I was fringe part of a commune close to here that was called Holidays, or Om. And I was still a business person, but I used to come down to dance [?]. After I dropped out, I had summer property up around Nevada City. And formed out of it a commune called The House of the Seventh Angel.

**Q:** In town, in Santa Cruz?

**EG:** No, in Nevada City. Outside of Nevada City.

**Q:** It's called The House of the Seventh Angel?

**EG:** Yes, that's from Revelations. They say that the seventh angel blows his trumpet and says, "The time is now. The days of the prophets are fulfilled."

**Q:** So when was that about? The late '60's, I suppose?

**EG:** Yes. Sixty-eight, '69. A good portion of the House of the Seventh Angel went on the Caravan, and some are still on the Farm to this day.

**Q:** So what took you way from there?

**EG:** Stephen Gaskin. He was my guru trip. Everybody goes through a guru trip at one lifetime or another, I suppose.

**Q:** So did you come over here and start going to Monday night class?

**EG:** Well, he was in San Francisco. I had started going while I was still in business. I had a big business with a lot of employees.

**Q:** What kind of business?

**EG:** I had jewelry, retail, and wholesale, import. And I went looking for a teacher after taking LSD, to find out what was this new, strange reality was that I found myself in. In the course of that, I found Stephen, and he was talking colloquially, hippie, so we could understand him. And he made a lot of sense. So has anybody talked about the Holy Man Jam in Boulder?

**Q:** It's been mentioned. Stephen was there, and I think Satchidanda, maybe.

**EG:** It was a seminal gathering of holy people. Lots and lots of them, not just Satchidanda and Stephen, there were many people. Satchidanda and Stephen didn't get along. There was a big fight. Stephen got invited to speak at a couple of churches in different parts of the country at that place. We were all there. So he said that he didn't want any of us to come, he was going to do this trip. So we all immediately prepared our vehicles to go with him. He wasn't going to get away without us. The House of the Seventh Angel suffered from a lot of the typical hippie commune problems, including the fact that I was really

Interview with Elizabeth Gips and Patty

Interviewer: Tim Miller

March 21, 1996

playing the role of codependent to a lot of nincompoops. That we burned down from candles. People couldn't support themselves, although there was some effort from some of the people to be self-supporting. We were so naive somehow or other, that we somehow didn't get it together to prepare for wintertime, lots of stuff like that. It was horrible.

**Q:** So you went to hear Stephen, and that was the end of the House of the Seventh Angel?

**EG:** Yeah. But the house was interesting. We started off in L.A.

**Q:** That particular group, you mean?

**EG:** Yes. I don't know, people just gathered around. There were some really neat people. In my book, there's a section on the house in L.A. It was a 40 room house we had, until we got kicked out by the Health Department.

**Q:** So then went up to Nevada City, California?

**EG:** Yes. And some of us divided up and went to live with Lee Scott down in San Bernardino, whose name I want to give you. He's in New Mexico now, he really knows almost all of the New Mexico people.

**Q:** So how long did the House of the Seventh Angel last?

**EG:** A couple years.

**Q:** So around '68, '69 you said?

**EG:** Yeah, I think the Caravan started in '70.

**Q:** Yeah, I think so, because they ended up at the Farm in the spring of '71.

**EG:** Before the House of the Seventh Angel, I lived with a fellow named Bill Paul, and a group of people in San Francisco. We stayed probably a half a year longer than we should have in the Haight/Ashbury. And that ended up with the police hitting everybody's heads. The police running down the street hitting hippie's heads, and then the hippies running in the other direction throwing flowers.

**Q:** Stephen actually was in the Haight through all of that I think, but I don't think Monday night class got going until somewhat later.

**EG:** Oh, no. Monday night class started with about 25 people -- I got in when there were about 25 people coming, and it was at Glide Memorial. But I think he started before that with just few people. And that was early-on, but I can't remember the date. Sixty-seven, surely. And it got bigger and bigger. It ended up at the Family Dog [?] with maybe 2 or 3,000 people coming, between 1500 and -- it was fantastic. The energy was so high. All you could do was sit.

**Q:** Were a lot of them stoned?

**EG:** Of course. There wasn't another way to be.

Interview with Elizabeth Gips and Patty

Interviewer: Tim Miller

March 21, 1996

**Q:** So what did you ride in on the Caravan? Did you get in one of the old school buses?

**EG:** No. Well, there was an Indian hippie guru named Ashofakir [?]. He was in the Haight/Ashbury. And he was sort of the guy who introduced a lot of us to Hinduism of his sort. He was a ganja smoking guru, who had taken LSD, although he wasn't really into it, not the way we were at the time.

**Q:** Was he from India?

**EG:** Yeah. Somehow or another, through a whole series of things, I was coming home from the shokes [?] one day, took the bus and got off at the wrong street. And there was this fabulous vehicle. It was a Cadillac that had been -- I've got to dub off what I've written in my book, because it's all in there for you. It was a Cadillac that had been cut off behind the driver's seat, and this living quarters kind of welded in, beautiful. As time went by, all kinds of things happened around it. When I finally decided to join Stephen, I was falling in love with a young man -- I was always falling in love with young men, it was a great period that way, or horrible, depending on how you look at it -- but he put in wood stove in the camper, and we traveled in that. It was the Cadillac Camper.

**Q:** So you went on the whole thing, from San Francisco all the way?

**EG:** Oh yeah. One of the greatest things I ever did.

**Q:** I was talking to Brandon last night, that's his favorite memory. He said the most fully together communal phase of it was the Caravan, he thought. Once they got settled, things began to change.

**EG:** I knew they were, too. I didn't really want to go in. I think we were the last vehicle to get into the Farm. There was something oppressive about the idea, because Stephen had said you couldn't come in without special permission. So already, I was sort of, "Wait a minute, what is this?"

**Patty:** Well, he announced that it was a Buddhist monastery, an ashram.

**EG:** There's something about the [unintelligible] guru that's devastating, I think. Pretty awful.

**Q:** Well, some people seem to do okay with it.

**EG:** Well, if you're from India, it's a role that you sort of got the gestalt around. But what it does for most Americans is put them on a power trip. And they don't get feedback. You know about Lee Watts [?] down in Arizona? He's one. All the way.

**Patty:** Very classic guru. His word is sacred, he's in charge.

**Q:** It's still going, right?

**Patty:** Yeah, in Prescott, Arizona.

**Q:** So anyway, it sounds like you turned off about the minute you got to the Farm, it was the beginning of the end, maybe.

**EG:** Yeah, I believe it was, but it took a long time to come on. I admire a good disciple type. Stephen broke me up with the young man I was dating there.

Interview with Elizabeth Gips and Patty

Interviewer: Tim Miller

March 21, 1996

**Q:** How come?

**EG:** He didn't approve. It was "bad." I mean, really, it laced me up and down. So there was that. There was terrible poverty, and that's what years later finally did the whole thing in.

**Q:** I think that's right, it just finally collapsed, economically.

**EG:** It was awful. We had days when there was just almost nothing to eat. Like maybe some people would go out and get work in the green pepper fields around there, and we had green peppers at supper. We made green peppers and some little hog potatoes that they usually feed to the hogs. It was very poverty-stricken. And then -- it was very hard for me, because I really believed Stephen. I don't know how to describe that relationship, I don't think it's a healthy one. But at any rate, maybe it is, for some enlightened beings. Besides the poverty, and the [unintelligible] . . . we got an epidemic of hepatitis.

**Q:** The watercress? Everyone thought, "This is great natural food."

**EG:** Did Brandon tell you about that?

**Q:** I think Albert Bates told me about that.

**EG:** That really disturbed me. It seemed to me like the people like Albert Bates and Peter, got fruit juices, and the rest of us got potato water. I may have something warped about that, but that's what was in my head, and that was unpleasant.

**Q:** Brandon, essentially, said last night that some people had more than others.

**Patty:** Yeah, the few on the mechanics crew, you got special treatment, you got better.

**Q:** So there's a class structure even in utopia.

**EG:** It wasn't utopia. But what was great about it was we had these ideals. And we were going to live pure, and we were going to change the world. Stephen went around a couple years later with a big sign on the back of his white bus, saying, "We're out to change the world." We really thought we were. Stephen said, I got it down somewhere in writing, one of the classes, he said, "We've got to put up a stop sign and stop humanity before it goes before it goes over the edge." Which is a really familiar thing today. That's what the Project Mind people feel, in Jerusalem. The union race is always just about to have had it. And we're going to say [unintelligible] . . . very messianic and dangerous.

**Q:** Messianic and dangerous, but also incredibly inspiring, I would think. What a thing to be doing! What else could you do that's better?

**Patty:** So you give up everything. Give up your money, give up your life, and you give up your power.

**EG:** The thing was, we really thought that the House of the Seventh Angel, also, we were convinced that we were forging a new way of relating and interrelating, and relating to society, that was going to make great contributions towards changing the society in which we lived. I think that was very common in the whole Haight/Ashbury period and afterwards. I wonder if it's still something people in community think.

Interview with Elizabeth Gips and Patty

Interviewer: Tim Miller

March 21, 1996

**Q:** I think not today, so much.

**EG:** Maybe we're less naive and more sophisticated and recognize our human -- last night we started talking about it again. I still feel, I feel -- and this is probably what wrote me into the House of the Seventh Angel, and into the Farm, and several times over the last 15 years, I've called together groups of people, hoping to get something started, but I don't really have the nerve to do it. I really feel that there's an evolutionary step that only a group of people can take together, even though each one of us has to evolve as individuals. There's some huge step, [unintelligible] pain and fear, that is a group process. And I don't know if anybody's doing it, but it seems to me I feel the change, somehow or other. So I think that was one of the great motivating factors for the whole communal movement. That there's some way as human beings to open to each other. Cauliflower, for instance, and a couple other places that I know if, actually broke down all the walls in their house, except the bathroom, I think. So that there wouldn't be any place to be solitary, to hide from each other. And we tried down in LA, the big house, we tried -- nobody was supposed to sleep alone. Nobody was supposed to be in a one-on-one relationship. That was finished, we weren't going to have that anymore. Everybody was going to love everybody equally, and therefore have sex with everybody.

**Q:** At the House of the Seventh Angel?

**EG:** Yeah. Not at Stephen's. But Stephen had 4 marriages.

**Q:** Yeah, even 6 marriages.

**EG:** Yeah. So we put all the mattresses in one room. The kids who were in love just went out into the woods and made love. It didn't matter. You're not going to change that so easily.

**Q:** So was it structured? Were you supposed to rotate around systematically?

**EG:** No, we didn't do that, but there is a group in San Francisco --

**Q:** --Carista.

**EG:** Yeah, have you talked to them?

**Q:** Yeah. They did it on a schedule. They had a chart. Each day, you're with so and so.

**Patty:** That's the other polarity.

**Q:** Yeah. But you all slept in one room and kind of let what happened, happen?

**EG:** Yeah. Not for very long. A month maybe.

**Q:** Even bathrooms weren't always private. Last night, talking to Paul Heavens, he said at Rock Bottom Farm, where he lived before he went to the Farm, the bathtub was out in the hall. They didn't believe in privacy.

**EG:** No, they didn't. When you were on the Caravan, if you were living with 9 or 10 people on a school bus, you learned how to do everything in front of everybody, take a shit, or made love, or whatever, everybody was there. There wasn't anywhere else to be. Some of the kids tried to make tents over themselves like this.

Interview with Elizabeth Gips and Patty

Interviewer: Tim Miller

March 21, 1996

**Q:** What did you do at the Farm day to day? Did you have a job?

**EG:** Oh God, I hate work. I mean, I work hard all day long, but I still don't like to work, and I hate it for people to tell me what to do. I was supposed to -- I wasn't a very good Farm member. I can't remember what I was supposed to do. I didn't do a whole lot, let's put it that way. I think I was in charge of [unintelligible]. The one that I did like was taking care of marijuana. There was marijuana growing. There were about -- you know about Stephen getting busted and all?

**Q:** Yeah, several of them went to jail.

**EG:** Stephen was in jail a long time.

**Q:** Yeah, about a year.

**EG:** To his credit, they put him into solitary because he refused to wear leather shoes. So I loved it. I walked down the railroad tracks, and through a beautiful piece of overgrown forest. Every day, Tennessee is so rich, and its weather is so humid, that it grows up every day, beautiful flowers. We played the flutes at my little patch of marijuana to keep the rabbits and things from eating it. I liked that job. But I used to look at the train going through the property, there was a train going through the first property, and I'd say, "I wish I was on that train." I really didn't know what was wrong, I was fooling myself. Then, after I broke up with the young guy I was living with, we even had one of the buses called The Nunnery -- you don't get none there. So I lived there. And then I moved in with a friend of mine named Miffin [?] Hunt, who I think still might be at the Zen Center in San Francisco. Under the pressures that were there, and under the pressure of being a human and not really having found our way out of the some of the human [unintelligible], we had a lot of tension between us. So at that point, some of the people were asked if they'd like to go to California to pick nuts and rice and stuff like that. So I came West so I could see my mother in San Francisco. We picked nuts, walnuts and everything. Which all burned up, I don't think any of them ever got back to the farm. I kept thinking while I was there, "I don't want to go back." They would say, "You've got to go back. What are you going to do? This is your life." So it was terrible. I would feel like I was psychotic for 2 or 3 months afterwards. It was a very hard transition for me. I'd walk around in San Francisco, just hysterical. Crying on the street. People would come up to me, and they'd say, "Are you alright," and I'd say, "Oh, no! I'm not alright! I'm terrible!" But I did do another communal trip, actually. Because I ended up at my son's radio station, KDNA, which was run by a community of 15 people who all lived together in a big house. They were mostly hippies. That was pretty dramatic too. We each paid \$80 a month for room and board.

**Q:** And the radio station was the support for it?

**EG:** I guess [unintelligible] was the support for it. I don't know where the money came from.

**Q:** It often seems to be one person that quietly --

**EG:** --Well, in the House of the Seventh Angel, it was definitely me.

Interview with Elizabeth Gips and Patty

Interviewer: Tim Miller

March 21, 1996

**Q:** I think at the Farm, it was true, wasn't it? Weren't there some people who brought in quite a bit of money?

**EG:** Everybody sort of waited for somebody to join who'd have money so we could eat again. I'm making it sound worse than it was. There were just wonderful moments there. Stephen's Sunday morning sermons -- has anybody told you about the sermons on Sunday mornings?

**Q:** I've read some of them.

**EG:** In San Francisco, long before the caravan, there was a group of us, much smaller than the Monday night class, who would get up at 4 o'clock on Sunday mornings, and go out to Beautiful Park. It overlooks the ocean there. And Stephen would be there. And we'd ohm the sun up, and then Stephen would talk. It was very high. That went on on the Farm on Sunday mornings.

**Q:** You got up at dawn?

**EG:** Got up just before dawn. The ohm -- I remember one day when I was a little late, I must've overslept or something, and everybody had been ohming for awhile, and they were up on top of the hills, and I'm walking up the hill, and it was like pushing into a force field. It was a force field, so intense, that I had to use all my strength to get up the hill to it. Amazing experience. So there was that, that was the pluses. And good people.

**Q:** I never met someone from the Farm who didn't think it had a lot of positive attributes in some way or another. I mean, every one of them, I've had a good appreciation for something.

**EG:** Idealists.

**Q:** Idealism is cheap, you know. Anyone can be an idealist, right? "I believe in a better world," and all that. But that was not cheap idealism, that was committed idealism, and that I just have to admire.

**EG:** Yeah, this is the lifestyle we think should be lived in order to create change for the human race. That's real idealism.

**Patty:** I went to the Farm in '75 with Ken Kise [?] and Libby [unintelligible]. I was struck by the poverty. They had community food distribution, and I was there when they were distributing the food. All they had was some potatoes and some onions. But the people, I thought, were very beautiful. I was impressed by their goodness. My question is, suppose they had money, suppose there was enough money to take care of all the physical needs -- would it have succeeded better? Would people have blossomed more rather than leaving?

**EG:** My own personal predilection is for a democratic situation. Theoretically, each person in a group situation has an area of expertise or understanding that the other people don't. So that when that is called on, they would be the leader. But it's in a circular motion, like a mobile, where people pass each other, stay a little while, and then go on and regroup. It wasn't possible, because Stephen was the teacher. That's alright, it's a traditional way of being. But I don't think it worked for who we were, and what we are. But then there are people who are still there, so I don't know. But of course, there was the revolution, too.

Interview with Elizabeth Gips and Patty

Interviewer: Tim Miller

March 21, 1996

**Q:** Right. Things are very different. There are a lot more creature comforts now.

**EG:** That's nice. The houses are pretty?

**Q:** Some of them are very nice, actually, and at worse, they're okay. No one is really living in absolute poverty, as far as I can tell.

**EG:** They were, before. Really early-on, I didn't give it a chance to gel. But I don't really think it did.

**Q:** It took 10 or 12 years to work, get beyond that step. And a lot of suffering between here and there.

**EG:** So that's good. So there I was, going from one communal situation to another. Learning what I needed to learn. When I got to the radio station and lived with those folks, sometime, about 2 months in, one of the guys said, "Elizabeth, if you quote Stephen as being the personification of wisdom once more, you're going to have to sleep in the basement!" I was still carrying Stephen. And when I got to [unintelligible] place in Boulder, Colorado, that's what they were doing there. They couldn't have carrot juice without saying, "Well, Churgen [?] would really approve of this," and then I realized that I had been doing that all along.

**Q:** The KDNA thing, was that in San Jose?

**EG:** No, St. Louis.

**Q:** Where you had been before?

**EG:** I had raised my kids there and swore I'd never live there again. And then I did.

**Q:** And when was that, that was early '70's, still, wasn't it?

**EG:** Yeah, '72? When was the Farm?

**Q:** Farm started in spring '71.

**EG:** So I left in '72, because I was just there 7 months. So '72, and '73, and then it got sold, the end of '73, the frequency got sold. And I came out -- I went through all kinds of changes. I went to a place called the Sharon Place in St Louis, first. And then later on, in Santa Barbara, where I had a community center. But it wasn't a commune, it was me -- it was a community center where everything was free. It worked for a long time. I fell in love with another young man. It was an interesting time.

**Q:** Could I quiz you a little more, Patty? How long did you say that you spent with Living Love [?]?

**Patty:** I was there two full months in the summer of '75. What inspired me to go there was Ken had come to the Miami area to a place called Cornucopia. It was a growth center which opened all kinds of psychic and spiritual doors to me, especially doing workshops nude. That was an enormous breakthrough for me, having come out of a religious renunciatory cast, no sex, no money. A woman said afterwards that she was going, her name was Stephanie, and she was going to California, to Berkeley, to spend time with Ken Kise [?]. And when she came back, she gave a glowing description of what it was all about, and how much she had improved, and felt so much better about herself and her life. So I scrimped and saved whatever money I could, and the next summer, the summer of '75, I hopped on a plane, landed in San Francisco, and I was early, so I spent the day in downtown San Francisco, around

Interview with Elizabeth Gips and Patty

Interviewer: Tim Miller

March 21, 1996

Powell Square. And I just hung out. It was a revelation of street performers and Native Americans and drunks and drug addicts. And then when I went to Berkeley for 2 months, Ken announced after dinner that there would be a test. The 12 pathways thing, the essence of his teaching. I thought, "Okay." I hadn't memorized them or anything, so I failed the test. And he said, "You have to leave." Well, I had no money. I already had put the money in for the two months, and I had nothing. I saw flags up on what looked like some kind of a Buddhist temple above Hearst St. I walked up the hill, and it was Nima [?], one of those institutes. I knocked on the door. I said, "You got any classes here?" He smiled and he said, "No, we don't have any classes." And then I came down and I saw a sign at the Lutheran church that said they were going to have gestalt weekend. I had been the gestalt [unintelligible] . . . so I said "Oh good, that's what I'm going to do." It was like \$30. I went back to the Living Love Center, I fell in love with this beautiful woman. She was doing a workshop there. So I went to see Ken and asked if I could stay for the workshop, and he said, "Sure." I said, "Take it out of the money." So here I am madly in love with this woman, and she was preparing the workshop, and so was I. Some guy stopped me, and he said, "Patty, while you are doing the workshop, memorize the pathways, and then tell Ken you know them." So I said, "Okay." So I did. Then, when the workshop was over, I said, "Ken, I'd like to get the rest of my money back." Because I wasn't going to be there, "And furthermore, I know your pathways." So he said, "Well, go ahead and recite them." So I shot through them. And he said, "Okay, you can stay." So now I'm caught, I'm going to stay, and this beautiful woman is leaving. She wants me to go with her to her place. So I stayed, because I wanted to work on myself, I wanted to grow, I wanted get over anxieties and fears, stuff like that, I wanted to feel more comfortable inside my skin.

**Q:** So that's what it was, a couple of months? In Santa Cruz?

**Patty:** In Santa Cruz, he had a place. And then Berkeley. And then he went to St. Mary's, Kentucky. We went there also. Big places. But that was a very conservative, Catholic area. They had to really cut way back on the nudity, low key. But again, it was a community -- you lived in community, you lived and slept with 7 or 8 other people. You ate your meals together, you did employment and you worked together, and you played together. You got one day off every two weeks.

**EG:** I picked up a woman hitch hiking once, somewhere on one of my journeys across the country, who had spent 8 years on Kentucky, and she was totally lost. She reminded me of how I was when I left the Farm. She said she couldn't find anything that had any meaning in life, and she didn't know what she was going to do. She knew she couldn't go back and stay there. But everything that she was and had been there -- that's one of the great dangers. You lose yourself.

**Patty:** Yeah, what I found was that it was what I call a "process community," like so many communities or religious ashrams or monasteries are, there are certain things you can talk about in a very narrow paradigm, and there are a lot of things you don't talk about, and you can't talk about. The language becomes like Elizabeth said, "Am I being good? Am I being perfect? Am I giving up materialism?" And if someone is having another strawberry more than you, it becomes petty.

**EG:** On my way to the marijuana fields every morning at 6 o'clock or whenever it was, I always stole a tomato, because I knew I wouldn't get a tomato any other way. It's ridiculous.

**Patty:** Even though Ken asked me to stay with him and travel with him, ongoing, I didn't think I could. And when the summer was just about over, I was really tired. I was into this [unintelligible] unconditional love. I was two feet off the ground, bopping around. And I met some guys on the BART station in Berkeley, and they said, "Hey, you want some mushrooms?" They opened up the tin foil, and

Interview with Elizabeth Gips and Patty

Interviewer: Tim Miller

March 21, 1996

there were nice mushrooms in there, and I said, "Sure." So they said, "Here, you can have them for \$20." So I gave them \$20. Then I went back to San Francisco, and I was hanging out with some Native Americans around Powell St. I was buying chicken, we were eating chicken and mushrooms. I was totally out of time and space, it had totally disappeared. I was in an altered state all the time. And I was there in Powell Square, and it dawned on me, "Oh, it's getting September," and I'm a guidance counselor in a high school. I said, "I think I've got to find out when school's going to start." So I called the school, and they said, "When is it going to start? We've been in school 4 days! Where the hell are you?" I said, "Oh, I'd better come back." They said, "Yeah, hurry up, get back here!" So I got on the plane, flew back to Miami airport, and got up to Opaloka [?], went into the school, and I got my schedule. Two periods of political science. And I said, "Oh, thanks a lot." And they said, "You'd better get going, your class starts in 5 minutes." So I walked into the classroom, and there were like 28, 30 seniors. I said, "This is your class, what would you like to do?" And of course, they had great ideas -- "Let's go to the ocean! Let's go swimming!" You know, "What do you want to cover?" So a hand went up in the back, I'll never forget it, it was a young woman I'd never met in my life. And she said, "Did you have breakfast yet?" I said, "No, I just came from the airport." And she said, "Come on, I'll take you to breakfast." So I got up, I left the whole class behind. She and a friend took me to McDonalds and treated me to breakfast. I said, "Thanks a lot, that's great." And they said, "Well, we've got another class, we'd better get going." period –

**Q:** And then you had another class.

**Patty:** Yeah. And I was like for 2 or 3 months like that. I had to end up -- I was hugging telephone poles, I saw God in everything. I just was in some kind of a God consciousness. I wasn't functioning like [unintelligible] . . . but there was so much oneness, and I think it was from Living Love, which is what he teaches, unconditional love and oneness. And that's the space you can be in. But I wasn't [unintelligible].

**Q:** You'd been a Merris [?] Brother for years before that.

**Patty:** I still am.

**Q:** But, what kind of preconditioning effect did that have? Did that open you up to the communal life?

**Patty:** Well, at the same I was going out experimenting, the religious life with its strict discipline, getting up at 5 in the morning, hours of prayers, mass, and meditation, thanksgiving, office, that had fallen apart. Brothers were leaving left and right all over the place. Some of the nuns too. So there was a disintegration happening in that area, and I was out looking around and exploring. Just in the guidance, I had no agenda or plans, but I was looking for I guess some kind of spiritual utopia. While I was in Miami, I hooked up with Muktananda [?], because our group, we had [unintelligible] . . . and the manda [?] lama [?]. The Muktananda people asked us if we could help them find a place for their ashram on Miami beach, where they wanted to be. I had seen pictures of Muktananda. He had the dark glasses on, very powerful [unintelligible]. We got them a hotel which they refurbished, and they got it free for 3 years. I used to go there, but I would never bow to him. I would go to the ashram and get a piece of candy. I was never like everybody else, bowing to him with his peacock feathers. I would laugh. And we got close to each other, we got to know each other. I stayed there, going to the Satsan [?] for about 2 and a half years, and that was a great teaching, because he taught –

Interview with Elizabeth Gips and Patty

Interviewer: Tim Miller

March 21, 1996

**Q:** --Where was that?

**Patty:** At Miami Beach.

**Q:** That's where Muktananda was then?

**Patty:** Yeah, he wanted to get away from the cities, and he wanted to have a place that would be on the ocean.

**EG:** That was part of the thrust of the communes, was to get away from the city. Because the migrational [?] rate was so paranoid and difficult to get your head straight.

**Q:** Well, Miami Beach is not exactly the country.

**Patty:** No, but it was a very Jewish, orthodox neighborhood. He was not accepted. The rabbis used to go and demand that he leave, because he was stealing the Jewish youth. Because they were [unintelligible] their own diaspora to seek other paths. He taught me to look inside and find the divine within your heart. It was such a beautiful revelation, and not always looking outside for validation. Knowing that I was part of the fabric of the divine, and not a separate sinner.

**Q:** Now, was that before you went to Living Love?

**Patty:** No, that was after.

**Q:** I thought Muktananda died by '75? He must not have. Maybe it was late '70's. It might have been later.

**Patty:** I think he might've died shortly after Miami. South Walsberg in New York, I went there and visited [unintelligible] . . .

**Q:** That's still going strong, isn't it?

**Patty:** Yeah. [unintelligible] . . . who was the secretary, became the guru. So now, I'm pretty much very happy to be who I am, and [unintelligible] is my ideal of spiritual celebration -- music and lots of ritual and candles and sharing. And working with the homeless. I think that's a great deal of satisfaction.

**EG:** I'd like to talk about children on the Farm. And probably at some point, you should get in touch with Silvia Anderson. She has a network of those children, they're now in their 20's. I gather from her, they're beautiful. But I really like the fact that they were taught not to be cutesy and whiny. They were spoken to as real people, and taught to be real, and not play games. When people would come to visit with their little kids, the Farm kids would look at them and say, "How do they get away with that? That's terrible? How do they get away with that? What a terrible way to be." I think they've grown up to be wonderful people.

**Q:** That's actually a pretty good test of what's going on there, I'd say.

**EG:** I'm sure something wonderful's going on.

**Patty:** I'm convinced that we can find that place where we move into more love and self-acceptance, and acceptance of other people, and be willing to contribute time and energy to make the community happen.

Interview with Elizabeth Gips and Patty

Interviewer: Tim Miller

March 21, 1996

**EG:** We talked about it last night. We're all scared because of our experiences in the '60's and '70's, we're all scared of having to move into a house with signs over the sink saying, "Do your own dishes, God dammit!" None of us wants that life again. We know that what we didn't know then -- we truly thought that within five years, society was going to be totally changed. Our time table was a little bit iffy. A thousand years of so off. But we truly thought that we were all going to learn how to be nice to each other in the next few years. We weren't always going to have the centuries of alienation. And I'm still looking for it. Which is why [unintelligible] . . . that's out of that training, isn't it?

**Q:** Sure.

**Patty:** [unintelligible] . . . for years and years. We'd have people sleeping over for awhile.

**EG:** To me, the ideal community - I use the word "community," I think we're not ready, and I hope you find people who have successfully shared everything. That would be wonderful, I would be curious to read your book. But somehow, most of the people I know aren't ready for that.

**Q:** I think that people that -- you know, at the Farm, there's now the private economy part, where you just make your own living, but there's also that communal group within in, 50 people within it. But I think they've all pitched in quite communally. Partly because maybe they've worked through so much history, I think as far as I can tell, they seem to be working pretty well. I think that's a problem that the '60's had, that people were reinventing the wheel.

**Patty:** There was no maps, nobody knew the territory. So it was like ready, fire, aim.

**EG:** Well, it's been a noble experiment. What we have here in Santa Cruz is a community where there are circles on circles on circles of people who interact and inter-relate and overlap. Just like I was describing, where the Holy Hemp Sisters get together to do a ritual for hemp, and then they move on, and then some of them get together to do a teaching which is happening Sunday, and then these people get together to help the homeless. It's a synergistic effect. We are living in community, like if someone gets ill, we do the grocery shopping. So in a sense, it's a community, but it's not communal.

**Patty:** Moving out of here and to experience community in another way, like at the homeless garden. We hired 22 people to work there, and then there are volunteers, and then there's the staff. And there's a sense of community that grows out of that. And we have, next Sunday, clean-up and planting, and celebration, and food. Bring your own tools, help out. That's really satisfying. The other night, we had a reading by a young man at the homeless depot, that's a railroad station office. And that was a nice sense of community. We let him stay here for 2 weeks while we were on vacation. So it's a little bit different. And yeah, we're still looking for [unintelligible] . . .

**EG:** What propelled you into doing all this?

**Q:** I was caught up in the spirit of the times. I didn't live in any place like Living Love or the Farm, but I lived in a small community outside of Lawrence for several years and was very attached to it. But also, the problems immediately surfaced. There were some wonderful times, but in the long run, it didn't go.

**EG:** We used to do LSD every Sunday. We'd sit around, it was beautiful, because we'd sit around and meditate, and do a little ritual, take our LSD, and sometimes I'd go to the Methodist church after that. I liked the minister. We'd go on picnics or whatever. Was it last night, someone was talking about everybody would take a picnic. I've forgotten. I still think that there's a giant evolutionary step out of

Interview with Elizabeth Gips and Patty

Interviewer: Tim Miller

March 21, 1996

fear and alienation that only a group can take. And I don't know the step, I don't think that anybody has got it, not in the sense that I am talking about. I was told years ago that a crystal pulls to it out of the elements what it needs to create its form, and that each of those little facets in the crystal retains its individuality, but becomes part of the whole. Surely that's greatly to be desired.

**Q:** Elizabeth, can I back up a little bit? I want to be sure I'm clear on sequence of events and things. You got communal for the first time in Los Angeles, right?

**EG:** There was this commune here, I was a business woman. So I had money. My part is to have the money. I used to come down to the commune that was down here, and bring acid on the weekends.

**Q:** It was here, that Holidays?

**EG:** Yeah, which George Hurd will tell you more about.

**Q:** But then you went from there to Los Angeles?

**EG:** From there I went to Bill Paul's in San Francisco, and that was a group of people who lived together in a San Francisco flat, and some of us, I wouldn't say it was really a commune, but some of us meditated twice a day. I thought we were getting really close. I was so excited. I was very idealistic. I wanted to step into God consciousness forever, right then. Just like Jim Morrison said, "We went the world, and we want it now." So, and that all fizzled. And from there, in the mean time I had formed this commune up in Nevada City. I finally moved up to it. Something had kept me from changing. Sometime it takes me a real heavy kick of the universe before I move on. So I moved up there. I don't know, I can't remember where LA fit in. I think it was before Nevada City. We were making -- there's a movie about the Haight/Ashbury, you probably ought to see it, the only insider movie that was made. I'll give you the guy's name to call about the video. Maybe you can buy it. There's another video -- did you talk to Lisa? Her bus was on Louis' land, which was a woman -- don't leave without getting Louis' phone number. Pierre did a video of the Haight/Ashbury happening. His take-outs are probably worth more than the movie, actually. But you'd have to work pretty hard. He's very arrogant, he's become a serious alcoholic. On the other hand, I think the movie's extremely valuable. I was financing it, of course, and he was down in LA, that's why we rented the place in LA. I think that was before Nevada City. It's probably in my book.

**Q:** So why Nevada City?

**EG:** Because I owned property, I had a lot of money.

**Q:** So you had a summer house up there?

**EG:** I had a house that I happened to buy on Ashbury, gorgeous house, big mansion, and then I bought this place out in the country, a few acres. That was for my summer home. I don't know how I did it.

**Q:** But the house burned down?

**EG:** Eventually, it burned down, and then everything burned down. Go to the scrapbook of Haight, it's got a lot of information. It's very valuable, because I don't think anybody's written about those days from the personalized point of view, of what it was like, what I was going through, the horrors and the ecstasy. So we got that. And then we went up to Nevada City I formed from the group in Los Angeles.

Interview with Elizabeth Gips and Patty

Interviewer: Tim Miller

March 21, 1996

But I was still living with Bill Paul, and I finally moved up to Nevada City, and then we all decided to go on the Caravan. We created the Caravan, actually, because Stephen really wasn't behind it.

**Q:** But people just kind of insisted on going?

**EG:** Yeah. We ended up with 125 vehicles, at least. And it was -- in the book that I haven't finished, I call it the Acts, like in the Bible. The Acts is where the disciples go through this diaspora and spread the word of Christianity. That's what we were doing. It was very dramatic. So from the Farm I came back, got hysterical. Finally, I was going back to Tennessee, and I didn't want to. I got on the train, I didn't know what to do with myself. I said, "Listen, Jesus, I've never prayed to you before, and I'm not sure I believe in any of it, but I need help." And that's when I ended up doing radio for the first time. The guys at the -- I stopped to see my son and all the people at the commune -- that was a commune there. They said, "Just stay here." So I did.

**Q:** Is your show on today?

**EG:** No, it's on Tuesdays. So that's the story. And I think I believe the potential of communes is changing the world.

**Q:** What do you think of Stephen's current effort, the Rosanante thing?

**EG:** I haven't seen it get anywhere. Is it happening?

**Q:** I think it's happening slowly. He owns the land, and there's some construction on it, I don't know how much.

**EG:** I really love the idea of going from birth to death. He was going to have the birthing center -- I don't want to hurt Stephen, I love him, he's beautiful, and he taught me a great deal. He taught me a lot about honesty and how to use psychedelic experiences to enhance day to day living. I think that's a huge teaching, grounding in experience. But Ina Maze [?] is the one who made Stephen famous with her birthing center, and the book *Spiritual Midwifery*. Every country in the world has its version of it. The idea of going from that to a place for old people, to a hospice for dying, is wonderful. But it depends on how much -- like if I can't have a steak once in awhile, I don't want to be there. I'm serious. Who is going to make the rules, and how much democracy is there going to be? Because without democracy, I don't see how the communal -- it's the same old guru trip. I graduated from that.

**Q:** There are a lot of very successful communities that are democratic, so it's not impossible.

**EG:** Tell me some.

**Q:** Twin Oaks in Virginia. There's several related ones -- East Wind.

**EG:** And they all have this thing about working -- you get work credits.

**Q:** But they're democratic, and treat people decently. They're seriously egalitarian.

**EG:** What do they do about working out personality differences?

Interview with Elizabeth Gips and Patty

Interviewer: Tim Miller

March 21, 1996

**Q:** They must have some structure for dealing with it. I don't know though.

**EG:** Because the advantage of having a guru is that he tells you what to do about that. And that's the main barriers to successful communal life, is that we all come from such different backgrounds.

**Q:** I think what they do is they sit down and have long sessions of working through things and dealing with them. I'm sure that's tedious.

**EG:** Well, I had to do, I guess I still do, that a group of people could get together who would make the main focus of their lives dropping -- I call it alienation. No matter how much I get to love you, should we get to know one another, there will always be a space inside of me that, it's looking and weighing things out. Do you know the space?

**Q:** You mean something that stands in the way of total, uncritical acceptance? I think, isn't that kind of fundamentally human? We all have a little bit of that.

**EG:** Yes, but I think we need to transform that into understanding, objectively, that you're not capable of doing such and such, this is an area where you don't function very well, and I accept you totally, in spite of that, knowing that I've got my own space, and that somehow or another, I still assume that psychedelics would be a part of that. Especially since the advent of MDMA. Have you ever had that?

**Q:** Never had that.

**EG:** It's incredible. It's not a true psychedelic, it's heart expanding. It makes it possible for me to sit down with you, should we have vast differences, and talk about it in so much love, instead of pent up anger and residual fear. That we can work it out. I really think that should that ever come about to be a possible -- a group of people to say, "This is really what I really want to do with my life -- I want to stop feeling those things I feel, the hurt, and I know it's possible. But I've been scared." And get 5 or 10 -- not too many -- people together, who would say, "Yes, I want to make this the focus of my life." That's what I think a true commune would be. The one that I'd like to be a part of. I will probably, if it's true that there's reincarnation, I swear I'm going to come back and do it.

**Q:** It ought to be there somewhere. That's not a dream that's impossible.

**EG:** It's going to happen. It's like the whole -- all of the communes who were more or less successful, are somehow birthing this group. And once one group of people does it, then it will spread. There will be more and more. And I believe, because I prefer to believe, that we can drop the bottom levels of the duality system. If enough of us drop those levels of anxiety and fear, that they'll drop away for the whole race. And the transformation that we so have yearned for, will have happened. And I just know that it's going to happen. Or maybe is happening, but slowly. I feel that it's -- I'm sentimental, I hate to see people suffer. I hate to see me suffer. But I hate to see people suffer. Starvation and injustice and all. And I think the communal effort that I'm describing will stop it. I believe that. I guess I believed it, and that's what propelled me 25 years ago to do all those things. That's why I'm here.